The doctrine of Holiness in Gregory of Nyssa

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PREFACE

The following study on Gregoiy of Nyssa is a result of my long journey for seeking holiness. I have experienced many mistakes and misunderstandings until now and will experience more, I trust, however, that the God of holy strengthen me and all those who have the same passion for holiness and make us able to walk, think and live out holiness with Him.

I wish to express my gratitude:

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I dedicate this dissertation to the late Mrs. Betty-May Thomas who always encouraged me and who prayed through my final year in Manchester.

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INTRODUCTION: THE METHODOLOGY OF THE GREEK FATHERS

Gregory of Nyssa, whose name is sometimes associated with John Wesley1, is also unique in his doctrine of holiness. He who lived out the controversial 4 century as a defender of Nicaea orthodox faith utilised the theological method of the Early Church Fathers such as Irenaeus or Athanasius, and applied it to the doctrine of holiness. Thus his place in the history of church is enormous although he was critiqued because of his universalism and the imagery within the atonement as the Christ as the bait to "hook" Satan. We begin this dissertation by describing the outline of this methodology.

Boris Bobrinskoy says in his recent book on Trinity;

> On the one hand -and this is manifest at the Council of Nicaea- what is at stake in the Trinitarian controversy is soteriology, and at its core, is the question: "Who is Christ? What is the nature of the Word of God, an exceptional creature of God?" The very concept of our salvation in all its fullness depends on the answer to this question 2

Here are three important observations; firstly, the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be separated from soteriology; secondly, there is the inseparability between soteriology and Christology; thirdly, the span of the salvation, namely the relationship between soteriology and the doctrine of holiness, depends on Christology. Therefore, Trinity,

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1 This is sure, if Outler is right (Outler, A. C. John Wesley. NY: OUP., 1964, 9-10)and the true author of the Macarian Homilies were not by Macarius the Egyptian but by a fifth-century Syrian monk whose conception of the Christian life was drawn almost exclusively Gregory of Nyssa. Greathouse is no the same opinion with Outler. (Greathouse W. M. From the Apostles to Wesley. Christian perfection in historical perspective. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press., 1979. 59.n31) Also, John G. Merritt ""Dialogue" within a Tradition: John Wesley and Gregory of Nyssa Discuss Christian Perfection " Wesleyan Theological Journal 22:2 (Fall, 1987), 92-116. Yet, still we cannot doubt profound influence of the Greek fathers on Wesley.

2 Bobrinskoy, B. The Mystery of the Trinity. NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press., 1999,256.

soteriology, Christology and holiness are unitary and define one another.

David Rainey3 also proclaims that the doctrine of holiness begins with the doctrine of God. The Fathers rightly understood that God reveals himself to man through the Scripture, so the Bible is the starting point of theology. Also they believed that the primary initiative came from God and not from man. God is infinite. Theology, the work to understand the revelation of the infinite God, is never ceasing, too. This is the reason why the Fathers continued to ask the question, "Who is God?" Rainey writes on God in the Scripture.

> The thread that ran through the development of the doctrine of God identified God as transcendent, separate, distinct from humanity. Yet God was also immanent, involved with all of creation, in order to bring restoration, healing, and reconciliation to a creation facing destruction on account of sin. Of primary importance was John 1:14, "The Word became flesh and lived among us.' This was the transcendent God now entering into human life in order to restore fallen and corrupt humanity. (20)

Indeed, God revealed himself most distinctively in the incarnation. Therefore, the doctrine of God begins with the question, "Who is Christ?"(Christology) At the same time this question is connected inseparably with another question, "What did Christ do?" (Soteriology). If Christ is truly divine as well as truly human, the work of Christ should be to assume our humanity and overcome its problem. Gregory found the important role of human free will in pursuing the answer to this question by starting from the doctrine of God. Also, if the purpose of the work of Christ, which begins with

3 Rainey, D. "Re-Minting Christian Holiness Part 20: Holiness in the Early Church Fathers." The Flame 67.3 (2001), 20-21.

the incarnation, is the overcoming of the human problem, the scope of the work of Christ inevitably includes the finishing of the aim of the creation. Thus, towards the union and communion with God, the movement began by God and moves back to God. The end of the movement is the triune, holy and infinite God. Gregory, in this way, develops his unique and very practical doctrine of holiness by emphasizing the infiniteness of God.

In this dissertation, we research the doctrine of holiness in Gregory in the light of the Fathers' methodology outlined above. Chapter one argues for the background to understand Gregory, while chapter 2 is designed to clarify his Christological and soteriological inheritance from the preceding Fathers. Then his unique contribution on the matter of human free will and plight is discussed in chapter three which is followed by chapter four where his doctrine of holiness will be described. Finally, in the conclusion, the practical significance of the definition of sanctification in Gregory will be argued.

1 Gregory of Nyssa

1.1 Life and times

Anus (256-326) came from Antioch to Alexandria and his teaching was called Arianism that is, . .the typical product of theological rationalism. It satisfied superficial minds to a high degree because it gave a simple and easy answer to the very difficult question of the relation existing between God the Father and God the Son."4 Arius denied the divinity of the Son because God is uncreated and unbegotten. He thought the Son was the first of the creation and something between God and the world. He was ordained as the son of God without being truly God in his essence. The incarnation, for Arius, the indwelling of the Logos into the human Jesus Christ.

In spite of the proclamation, "...the Son of God... one substance (ojioowiov) with the Father..." in the first ecumenical council at Nicaea (325) and the condemnation of Arianism, it did not cease. In 328 the champion of the Nicaea orthodox faith, Athanasius was ordained as the bishop of Alexandria. Yet the fact that he was banished

4 Quasten, J. Patrologv Volume m Allen TX: Christian Classics., 1959, 8.

five times from his Episcopal see by Arians meant that his life was long struggle with them.

With Athanasius, three men called the Cappadocian Fathers fought against the Arians. They are Basil (330-379), his friend Gregory of Nazianzus (-390) and Basil's younger brother Gregory of Nyssa (335?-395?). Gregory of Nyssa did not learn at university in Athens where the other two were educated and he claims that all he had acquired in the field of higher learning he owed his brother Basil5. Meredith, however, it is hard to believe that Gregory derived all his knowledge of philosophy and theology from his brother, if only because his grasp of these areas seems greatly superior to Basil's.6 Gregory was fascinated by pagan learning7 and became the teacher of rhetoric and was married. Basil appointed Gregory bishop of Nyssa in 372 rather against Gregory's will. During the age between 375and 378, he was banished from his see by the Arian emperor Valens who tried to get rid of the bishops who were faithful to Nicaea. Yet it was during this period that he seems to experience some kind of crisis in his faith and he began to help Basil in the work of establishing monasticism in Cappadocia. Also his first work The Treatise on Virginity was composed during this period. After the death of

5 Letter 13.5.
6 Meredith, A. The Cappadocians. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press., 1995. 52-3
7 Danielou, J. From Glory to Glory. NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press., 1961.3

Basil in 379(or 377), Gregory took over the whole extent of Basil's far-ranging activity; theological, monastic, and ecclesiastical.

Gregory who returned from the council of Antioch in 379 to his see found the intrusion of a heresy named Eunomianism and he had to face it. The Eunomians regarded the Son as a creation like the Arians. They had a view that the distinction between the unbegotten Father and begotten Son does not allow them have the same nature. Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus wrote refutations of Eunomius. Now Gregory enjoys the heyday of his public career. In 381 he gave the opening address at the Council of Constantinople which was invoked by the emperor Theodosius who also made Gregory of Nazianzus the chairman in this council. After this council Against Apollinaris and Against Eunomius were written by Gregory of Nyssa.

Eunomianism that was condemned in the council had arisen circa 373. Apollinaris (-390), the bishop of Laodicea, was originally the fighter against Arians and supported Athanasius. Yet, he has erroneous view in chiefly three points; (1) The incarnated Logos, Jesus Christ, did not possess the human soul; (2) Christ's body is heavenly, not

earthly; (3) In Christ, there is only one nature (φύσις). According to Anthony Meredith , Apollinaris came to hold this view by emphasizing the unity of Christ. But if Christ were truly one, he could have only one leading principle. This leading principle, Apollinaris asserted to, is the divine nature of the Word. But, if so, there is no place for the human soul in Christ. In the background of his thought, there was a difficult question regarding Christ's sinlessness. If Christ was sinless, and he was, and had to be so if he were to save us, then he could not have a fragile human soul, which everyone knew from experience as liable to sin. This led him to the extreme position. This is important matter and we will see it in chapter 3 in detail.

It was the pinnacle of Gregory's career that he was chosen to deliver the funeral eulogies in honor of the departed empress Flacilla and her daughter Pulcheria. The Great Catechetical Discourse belongs to this period when he was in close contact with philosophical circles at Constantinople and felt he had to reply to their objections to the dogma of the Incarnation. Gregory's influence seems to decline sharply after 386. Yet it is exactly in this period that he was released from theological controversies and reflected on inner spiritual life as in The Life of Moses and Commentary on the Canticle

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The Cappadocians.

of Canticles. Presumably he died in about 394.

Athanasius and the Cappadocians established the doctrine of trinity. They took philosophical words such as "ύπόστασις" or "ούσια" in order to define them for their own purpose that: "It was a question of finding a distinction of terms which should express the unity of, and the differentiation within, the God head, without giving the pre-eminence either to the one or to the other.. .9

According to Lossky, two words, "ύπόστασις" or "ούσια", were originally more or less synonymous. On the one hand, "ούσια" means an individual substance, while being capable at the same time of denoting the essence common to many individuals. On the other hand, "ύπόστασις" means existence in general, yet capable also of application to individual substances. The Fathers, through Basil's particular contribution, successfully distinguished two words at the same time to preserve the original nuance. When they use the word "ούσια", they mean essence, common nature, yet it still preserves the flavour of particularity. Also, when they use "ύπόστασις"άάάάάά, they mean personality, particularity between individuals, yet it still has the sense of common essence. Thus

9 Lossky, V. Tn th^ Image and Likeness of God. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir Seminary Press., 1974. 50.

these words functions as a kind of analogy which describe a heavenly thing, which does not have exact expression on the earth. This was important to refute both a Sabellian unitarianism and a pagan tritheism. Of even more import was, however, it realized the distinction between economic and immanent trinitv. If the Son is the same with Father in essence while differing as persons, the infinite unknowable essence of God no longer contradicts our faith in the knowable, life-giving God in the history.

Gregoiy did not have the ability of management like Basil nor the skill of preaching and writing of poetry like Gregory of Nazianzus. His gift was, Johannes Quasten says10, the one of a speculative theologian and mystic who wrote many ascetic works. Of particularly importance is his outstanding ability as a theologian. Without this ability, in my judgment, he could not contribute to the field of the doctrine of holiness. Because he was the one of those who had contributed to the establishment of the doctrine of trinity, he could unite the communicable life-giving God and the infinity of God who is beyond recognition. This very connection made him possible to propose a very unique model in Christian holiness as we shall see.

10 Patrology Volume III. 254.

1. 2 Neo-Platonism

The emperor Julian forbade Christians to instruct in school by the School Law of 362.11 Gregory of Nazianzus' reaction represents the Cappadocian understanding between Christianity and Hellenistic heritage. He insisted to the emperor that the pagans should not monopolize Greek language, and Christians should not be excluded. The Fathers tried to use Greek philosophy with Christian theology for the purpose of drawing human understanding nearer to the mystery of faith. And it is Gregory of Nyssa who exercised this effort most boldly.12 In the Life of Moses13, the account of the reception of Egyptian accessories were regarded as the utilization of pagan learning.

Yet, on the other hand, Gregory of Nyssa shows a very cautious attitude to Hellenistic culture, the same as Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus. In the Life of Moses, pagan philosophy is described as a barren woman (nil) . Gregory, thus, did not utilize pagan learning without criticism. He knew the necessity of exclude anti-Christian thought from pagan learning. Moses' wife was regarded as an example of this.14

11 The Cappadocians. 115-6.
12 Patrology Volume XH 283.
13 The Life of Moses. NY: Paulist Press., 1978 (HI 15-6)
14 Also, The Life of Moses, II50.

> The foreign wife will follow him for there are certain things derived from profane education which should not be rejected when we propose to give birth to virtue. Indeed moral and natural philosophy may become at certain times a comrade, friend, and companion of life to the higher way, provided that the offspring of this union introduce nothing of a foreign defilement. (11.37)

> For example, pagan philosophy says that the soul is immortal. This is a pious offspring. But it also says that souls pass from bodies to bodies and are changed from a rational to an irrational nature. This is a fleshly and alien foreskin. And there are many other such examples. It says there is a God, but it thinks of him as material. It acknowledges him as Creator, but says he needed matter for creation. It affirms that he is both good and powerful, but that in all things he submits to the necessity of fate.(H40.)

Gregory, actually, was influenced greatly by Plato. We can see it in his education, terminology and the way of approaching to the question. Neo-Platonism, especially the elements in Plotinus and Stoic philosophy, influenced Gregory's conception of morality. Yet, these became the common inheritance of all schools of those days. Gregory transformed it into the tools for Christianity, while depending on its form. Gregory, who, tried to access mystery through reason, did not try to replace faith by reason. For its evidence Quasten quarts from Gregory's Quod non sint tres dii and says; If our reasoning be found unequal to the problem, we must keep for ever firm and unmoved

the tradition which we received by succession from the Fathers15

Gregory took up the terminology of Greek philosophy and used it to express Biblical ideas. Of those the words, "άπάθεια" and "άρετὴ" are particularly important for this essay. Mar Gregorios16 (194ff) says that, for Stoicism and Neo-Platonism, "άπάθεια" is the goal to be aimed and it means the absence of all passion and desire. For them, passion basically belongs to body, which is evil and source of vice. The Soul will be free from evil when it is released from its body. Yet. Gregory, who has the biblical view that man was made as an integration of soul and body, regarded freedom from passion, άπάθεια, as not the disappearing of the body but the right use of the body with its sense and passion. On the other hand, apeTfj (virtue) has the same definition among all Platonism, Aristotle and Stoicism. It is to control one's ability and passion toward rightly chosen aim. Aristotle says in Nicomachean Ethics that virtue was a hexis proairetike - a disposition of the faculty of choice.(2.5) Gregory applied this definition of virtue in Greek philosophy without change. Thus, on the one hand audGeia was given a new meaning, while aperr) preserves the original meaning. Yet both words serve to express the Biblical idea.

Patrology Volume III. 285.
Gregorios, P. M. Cosmic Man —The Divine Presence. -

The other important distinction of Gregory from Platonic tradition was the recognition of God's fundamental unknowability. Vladimir Lossky says, "The heterodox doctrine with which Origen was charged had their root in a certain insensibility towards the unknowability of God on the part of this great Christian thinker."17 Thus this recognition was one important idea to establish one's theology within the biblical framework. According to Meredith, in the Platonic tradition to be unlimited and therefore without definition was to be strictly unknowable and therefore somehow defective, because, in such a case God cannot know himself.18 Yet Gregory knew that the God of the Scripture could be known only when he revealed himself. Gregory's criticism against Eunomius was made from this point of view. Eunomius' error comes from his habit to make intellectual speculation superior to knowing God by faith.

Gregory says; How pitiful are they for their cleverness; how wretched, how fatal is their overwise philosophy. How far have they separated themselves from the hope of the Christian. How far have they withdrawn themselves from Abraham the Father of faith.19

17 Lossky, V. The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church. Cambridge: James Clark and Co. Ltd., 1957, 32.

18 The Cappadocians. 66.

Answer to Eunomius' Second Book. NPNF 5, 510

The linknowability of God derives from the infiniteness of Him. This infiniteness of God, together with the recognition of the permanent change of the creature as we see next, led Gregory to the doctrine of epectasis. It is believed that changeable is not perfect in Platonic tradition. Yet, Gregoiy thinks, "...the created nature cannot exist without change; for its very passage from nonexistence to existence is a certain motion and change of the non-existent transmuted by the Divine purpose into being. The change itself is neither good nor bad, yet of importance is the direction of the change which could be "better or worse" 21Therefore, to control the direction of the alternation is of particular importance for Gregory. Furthermore, his recognition that perfection exists in progress itself was surely the great jump from Greek philosophy.

1.3 Origen

It is evident that, on the interpretation of the Scripture, Gregory is close to the Alexandrian tradition, which tries to find meaning beyond the literal interpretation of the text, rather than the Antiochene that sticks to literal meaning. We can see the shadow of Origen who distinguished between literal interpretation and spiritual

20 On The Making of Man. 16.12 (NPNF5)
21 The Life of Moses IL2

meaning. In the introduction of Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles, Gregory mentions Origen by name and confesses that his work is another output from Origen's method. It was legitimate for Gregory to find the meaning beyond literal text because Paul and Jesus did it in the New Testament. Paul in Gal. 4:24 regards two sons of Abraham as the one who is in the grace of new covenant, while the other not. Jesus in John3:14 thought the bronze snake in the Numbers as the type of the cross of himself.

Yet Gregory did not force the persuasion of spiritual meaning of the text without principle. It had a clear aim and necessity for him. In The Life of Moses, it was done "in order to obtain suggestions of virtue."(1.15) That is to say, the methodology of Gregory is to use text for proving his theology and not the other way round. Therefore, Gregory begins with theologizing various New Testament data and then he proceeds to examine Exodus or Song of Songs according to his theology for seeking evidence of his theory. This is clear from the verse of The Life of Moses below.

> If the events require dropping from the literal account anything written which is foreign to the sequence of elevated understanding, we pass over this on the grounds that it is useless and unprofitable to our purpose, so as not to interrupt the guidance to virtue at such points. (II・50)

Consequently, either Exodus or Song of Songs provides the occasion to display the theology of Gregory, especially the doctrine of God, Christ, Salvation and holiness. It is easy to accuse Gregory as the one who did not use historico-grammatical exegesis. Yet, the theological value of Gregory should not be underestimated for it.

2 Soteriology before Gregory

2.1 Soteriological concern of the Fathers

As early as the second century, Irenaeus22 said, "God became humanity in order that humanity might be made Godlike" 23. The same phrase repeatedly appeared in the Fathers such as Athanasius and Gregory of Nyssa.24 The concern of the Fathers with the incarnation is derived from the fact that without it salvation is impossible. The Gnostics who were opposed by Irenaeus regarded material things as evil and denied the humanity of Christ. For them, if Christ is God, it is impossible that he suffered on the cross. Against them, Irenaeus insists that humanity cannot be saved without Christ's humanity. Human salvation could not be achieved if Christ were not truly God and truly man. This is well expressed in Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching, 39. In this work, it is said that, without Christ's birth, there is no cross and resurrection. Resurrection is the defeat of death and the end of its rule. Thus Christ's incarnation brought life to us.

The soteriological concern of the Fathers with the incarnation, however, should not be thought of as if it were formed by chance through controversy with heresies. Athanasius wrote, "For He was made man that we might be made God;" in On the Incarnation of

22 The reason we start our investigation with the soteriology of Irenaeus is stated by Aulen who says, "he is the first patristic writer to provide us with a clear and comprehensive doctrine of the Atonement and redemptioa" and "His strength lies in the fact that he did not, like the Apologists and the Alexandrians, work along some philosophical line of approach to Christianity, but devoted himself altogether to the simple exposition of the central ideas of the Christian faith itself. Aulen, G. Christus Victor. London: SPCK., 1931. 32-33.

23 Against Heresies, Book V Preface. (ANF1)

24 The Great Catechism. 25. (NPNF5)

the Word,25 which is not a controversial book and the name of Arms is absent. Thus the Fathers built their soteriology on the basis of the incarnation, namely Christ's complete divine and human person. It is because they knew that the work of Christ, salvation, should not and cannot be separated from his person. On the other hand, heresies began their speculation in order to find a rational explanation for the person of Christ, and as a result, came to deny the authenticy of the incarnation. Thus, the argument of the Fathers is not ontological but rather soteriological

When we follow the Father's methodology, we can find a very different solution to the problem of God's impassibility from that of the Gnostics. The Fathers are not surprised by the fact that Christ really suffered because the incarnation is their starting point. Logically, it is difficult to hold together both human passivity and divine impassivity in the one person of Christ as long as we think of it in a static way. It is nothing other than a contradiction to say passable and at the same time impassible. Yet, it was a Biblical truth that the impassible God suffered in Christ, and the Fathers never considered removing this starting point. For them if it seems to be a contradiction, what is in question is not the fact of incarnation but our speculation. Indeed, Athanasius found the solution without questioning the incarnation by shifting his view from a static to a

25 Athanasius, On the Incarnation of the Word 54.3 (NPNF5)

dynamic understanding of God's action. Torrance summarizes Athanasius' view and says, "God in his measureless love and compassion has stooped to take upon himself our passion, our hurt and suffering, and to exhaust it in his divine impassibility."

Also, Christ's growth in knowledge, meaning that Christ's knowledge has human limitations, did not surprise the Fathers. It is because, as Athanasius says, Christ assumed our ignorance in order to save us from it.27

2.2 Salvation in ontological depth

Why does the incarnation bring us salvation? For Athanasius, first of all, salvation is the event which occurred within the life and person of the incarnated Son.

> ...He sends His own Son, and He becomes Son of Man, by taking created flesh; that, since all were under sentence of death, He, being other than them all, might Himself for all offer to death His own body; and that henceforth, as if all land died through Him, the word of that sentence might be accomplished (for 'all died' in Christ), and all through Him might thereupon become free from sin and from the curse which came upon it, and might truly abide for ever, risen from the dead and clothed in immortality and incorruption. For the Word being clothed in the flesh, as has many times been explained, ...whatever evil sprung from the motions of the flesh.. .with these death also was abolished, the companion of sin, as the Lord Himself says, 'The prince of this world cometh, and findeth nothing in Me;' and "For this end was He manifested,' as John has written, 'that He might destroy the works of the devil.' And these being destroyed from the flesh, we all were thus liberated by the kinship of the flesh, and for the future were joined, even we, to the Word. And being joined to God, no longer do we abide

26 Athanasius *ConApol*. 2.11, Torrance, T. F. The Trinitarian Faith. Edinburgh: T.&T. Claik., 1988,185-6.
27 Against Arians III.43-538(NPNF4)

upon earth; but, as He Himself has said, where He is, there shall we be also...28

In the above context, flesh means our whole humanity. Yet, the incarnation achieved more than our liberation from evil. It also includes the re-creation of humanity in Christ.

> ...His taking manhood, wherein also He collects together the tribes of Israel; so, as "being always with the Father,' He Himself is Framer of the creation, and His works are evidently later than Himself, and He created' signifies, not His beginning of being, but the Economy which took place for the works, which He effected in the flesh. For it became Him, being other than the works, nay rather their Framer, to take upon Himself their renovation, that, whereas He is created for us, all things may be now created in Him. 29

This is the reason why the incarnation is so important in soteriology. Humanity must have been assumed in Christ, otherwise it can be neither healed nor re-created. Also, Athanasius and the Cappadocians criticised the Arians so fiercely for the purpose of defending the doctrine of salvation in its human ontological depth. Athanasius focused on Christ's priestly office in his soteriology, yet it should be understood in this depth.

> I mean, Aaron was not born a high-priest, but a man; and in process of time, when God willed, he became a high-priest; yet became so, not simply, nor as betokened by his ordinary garments, but putting over them the ephod, the breastplate, the robe, which the women wrought at God's command, and going in them into the holy place, he offered the sacrifice for the people; and in them, as it were, mediated between the vision of God and the sacrifices of men. Thus then the Lord also, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;' but when the Father willed that ransoms should be paid for all and to all, grace should be given, then truly the Word, as Aaron his robe, so did He take earthly flesh, having Mary for the Mother of His Body as if virgin earth, that, as a High Priest, having He as others an

28 Against the Arians II ・ 69(NPNF4)
29 Against the Arians II ・ 53 (NPNF4)

> offering, He might offer Himself to the Father, and cleanse us all from sins in His own blood, and might rise from the dead.30

Through the incarnation Christ became the high priest who is the mediator between God and us. When the Fathers call Christ our mediator, it does not mean that Christ stands up for both sides as an arbitrator in a modern court. Christ completed this mediation in himself. The mediation was made possible by the union of divine and human nature. Here we can see the impossibility of separating the person and work of Christ. Christ became high priest and also the sacrifice, which is offered by the high priest. It was offered to sanctify humanity. Thomas Torrance condemns Arians because, "...if Jesus Christ were not the incarnation of the only begotten Son who is eternally in God, then he would constitute no more than a created and temporal centre ontologically external to God" and the result is "the atoning sacrifice of Christ would then be understood only in terms of some kind of superficial socio-moral or judicial transaction between God and mankind which does not penetrate into the ontological depths of human being or bear savingly upon the distorted and corrupt condition of man's actual human existence."

That is to say, if the Son was not divine and was instead a creature, his atoning incarnation would mean the substitution of another creature for humanity. In that case,

30 Against the Arians II:・7 (NPNF4)
31 The Trinitarian Faith 158

the recapitulation of humanity in Christ is impossible and, consequently, the problem of humanity cannot be dealt with. What Torrance calls, "the atoning sacrifice of Christ... in terms of some kind of ...judicial transaction" might be understood as the penal substitutional view of the atonement that has as its central concern the penalty paid for our sin. Yet our high priest, Christ, dealt not only with our penalty but also with sin itself in his own depth of existence. Also, "superficial socio-moral" atoning sacrifice might be understood as being close to modern moral influence theory which emphasizes Christ as our moral example. This theory, too, has a defect in its lack of recognition of what happens in our, and Christ's, ontological depth. Though it is biblical analogy which was described in the penal substitution theory or the moral influence theory, when they are cut off from the restoration of humanity in human ontological depth, these views cannot reach under the surface just as the Arians could not.

The three offices of Christ have their own grounds in the Scripture. It is true not only of his priestly and kingly offices, but also of, his prophetic office that it gives us the will to obey him. Torrance, however, says when we forget, "union with God in and through Jesus Christ who is of one and the same being with God belongs to the inner heart of the atonement", the result is "interpretation of the various aspects of his death in terms of external relations could not but break into different 'theories of atonement' - which

unfortunately is what has regularly happened in Western theology." On the other hand, the atonement theory that runs through Irenaeus, Athanasius and the Cappadocians, according to Torrance (170ff) is the inseparable integration of the three aspects; dramatic, priestly and ontological. The Ontological aspect emphasizes, as we have seen already, Christ who reconciles us to God who unites and communicates with us. At its centre we can see the recapitulation of humanity for salvation and the

substitutional obedience of Christ for the restoration of humanity. The Dramatic aspect, adopting Aulen's terminology, emphasizes the intervention of God who releases us from the tyranny of Satan and the bondage of sin and death. The hand of God who destroys evil is the obedience of Christ unto the cross. The Priestly aspect, indeed, penetrates the other two aspects, and it is Christ's sacrifice as the offering of propitiation, which deals with sin and guilt, that is the enmity barrier between God and man. Christ is seen as both priest and offering.

The expression we have already cited above, "God became humanity in order that humanity might be made Godlike," has sometimes been described as the 'physical theory' of redemption, with the implication that it is merely through the physical union of the divine Logos with decaying humanity that the salvation of the human race is

32 The Trinitarian Faith. 159-160.

brought about. Torrance, however, regards this terminology as being very much open to misunderstanding due to the following two reasons;(l) It forgets that Christ worked personally for us as the incarnated Logos; (2) It also does not sufficiently emphasize that the work of Christ was done from the ontological depth of our human existence and also by the penetration of Christ into our humanity and the recapitulation of our human existence into Christ.33 The first point of Torrance implies that God, in Christ, began the work of salvation by his voluntary will. The second is about what we have often stressed above, the recapitulation and ontological change of our humanity. Thus the essence of salvation is by no means 'physical' but personal and ontological. This is the reason why Irenaeus could say, "the knowledge of the Son of God who is called and really is Salvation and Saviour and Saving Act."34The stage of the salvation for the Fathers was not outside but inside of man. It occurs in the depth of our ontological existence by a voluntary action from God's side.

2.3 Salvation of Whole humanity

Gregory of Nazianzus wrote in his letter 101 that the purpose of the incarnation is not, as the Apollinarians says, "...God, otherwise incomprehensible, might be

33 The Trinitarian Faith. 156
34 Against Heresies. 3.11.2 (ANF1)

comprehended, and might converse with men through His flesh as through a veil..." It is so that the salvation be realized only through the incarnated Word who could "...destroy the condemnation by sanctifying like by like..." And this salvation cannot be accomplished without Christ's assuming whole humanity.

Frances Young is quite right when she says that the Apollinarians' chief concern is also salvation as well as orthodoxy.35 Yet Apollinarians thought that Christ did not possess a human soul but that in him the divine person had united with a human body. This comes from their own belief in the unity of the humanity and divinity of Christ. Yet the unity is. however, some kind of physical or biological one, and Christ was understood as a heavenly man whose energy existed in the Word. This view derived from a particular conception of mediation of Apollinaris. Although he knew Christ as the mediator between God and man, for him the mediator could be neither perfectly divine or perfectly man. This strange idea derives from Apollinaris' loyalty to the superficial understanding of the perception of Athanasius, who thought that salvation depends upon God remaining immutable so as to free man from his sin and mortality. However, Apollinaris could not understand the necessity of Christ's perfect humanity for salvation

35 Young, F.M. From Nicaea to Chalcedon. A guide to the literature and its background.: London: SCM Press., 1983,188.
36 From Nicaea to Chalcedon. 188.

because of his lack of understanding of the ontological depth of Christ's mediation. 37

If Christ did not possess a human soul, then the soul cannot be saved. For salvation, "He needed flesh for the sake of the flesh and soul for the sake of our soul, so, too, He needed mind for the sake of mind..." Therefore, Gregory of Nazianzus emphasizes this and says, "For that which He has not assumed He has not healed; but that which is united to His Godhead is also saved."(Letterl01) Thus, salvation for the Fathers is of the whole humanity and is not restricted to any one human part, such as flesh, soul and spirit. Christ assumed the whole humanity in its fullness to save it.

2.4 The Solidarity of humanity

The Fathers thought that between Christ and us there is a representative solidarity between the first Adam and us.38 This solidarity makes our salvation possible. On the one hand, Adam is the head of the old humanity, on the other Christ is head of the new. Irenaeus used the word recapitulation to describe the work of Christ who not only recovered the damage but also brought humanity together. He writes;

37 Apollinaris failed in his methodology. He rightly recognized both the unity of Christ's person and sinlessness. Yet, he went too far when he thought that the sinless Christ could not possess such a weak soul of a human who cannot resist sin. Also, an ancient biological view that says that the human soul is inherited from the father while the body comes from the mother influenced his view. (Meredith, 112) This methodology starts from anthropology to Christology and radical speculation is regarded as superior to biblical data.
38 This is biblically based. See especially Romans 5.

> As it has been clearly demonstrated that the Word, who existed in the beginning with God, by whom all things were made, who was also always present with mankind, was in these last days, according to the time appointed by the Father, united to His own workmanship, inasmuch as He became a man liable to suffering, [it follows] that every objection is set aside of those who say, "If our Lord was born at that time, Christ had therefore no previous existence." For I have shown that the Son of God did not then begin to exist, being with the Father from the beginning; but when He became incarnate, and was made man, He commenced afresh the long line of human beings, and furnished us, in a brief, comprehensive manner, with salvation; so that what we had lost in Adam—namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God —that we might recover in Christ Jesus.39

This recapitulation is a somewhat loose solidarity because it does not mean automatic salvation of all men. For Irenaeus, the salvation of humanity chiefly means the ontological change which occurs in the humanity that is recapitulated in Christ. The later Fathers would succeed the concept of recapitulation. Athanasius expresses a similar idea in Against the Arians and says, "...His taking manhood, wherein also He

tribes of Israel;" so that . .whereas He is created for us, all things may be

2.5 Salvation in every stage of human life

Irenaeus thought that our ontological change was realized through the sanctifying work of Christ in every stage of human life. It was begun by his virgin birth and his lifelong

perfect resistance of sin through the Holy Spirit unto death.

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39 Against Heresies. 3 · 18 · 1, Italics mine. (ANF1)

> For He came to save all through means of Himself — all, I say, who through Him are born again to God — infants, and children, and boys, and youths, and old men. He therefore passed through every age, becoming an infant for infants, thus sanctifying infants; a child for children thus sanctifying those who are of this age, being at the same time made to them an example of piety, righteousness, and submission; a youth for youths, becoming an example to youths, and thus sanctifying them for the Lord. So likewise He was an old man for old men, that He might be a perfect Master for all, not merely as respects the setting forth of the truth, but also as regards age, sanctifying at the same time the aged also, and becoming an example to them likewise. Then, at last, He came on to death itself, that He might be "the first-born from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence/' the Prince of life, existing before all, and going before all.40

Thus Christ achieved what humanity cannot achieve in every stage of life from birth to death. It was victory over sin, death and hell. Athanasius also knew this, and says that Christ lived out entirely the same condition as us.

> .. .He became man for our sakes.' And on account of this, the properties of the flesh are said to be His, since He was in it, such as to hunger, to thirst, to suffer, to weary, and the like, of which the flesh is capable;41

J. K. Mozley rightly thought that Irenaeus particularly emphasizes the obedience of Christ and says, "What humanity as a whole lost through Adam's disobedience that it regains as a whole through Christ's obedience."42 The victory of Christ as the king was the chief motif for Irenaeus' theory of atonement, as he says, "He might kill sin, deprive

40 Against Heresies n ・ 22 * 4 (ANF1)
41 Against the Arians. DI.31 (NPNF4)
42 Mozley, J. K. The doctrine of the Atonement.. 101. The actual expression of Irenaeus was, "In the second Adam, however, we are reconciled, being made obedient even unto death." Against Heresies. V. 16.3

death of its power, and vivify man;"43 Yet, the liberation by Christ was not through military power but by his obedience in becoming man, living out life as a man and dying as the man Christ.

Gustaf Aulen in his Christus Victor explains his so called classic theory of atonement as "It is God Himself who enters into this world of sin and death for man's deliverance, to take up the conflict with the powers of evil and effect atonement between Himself and the world."44 His view is often misunderstood as the simple military image. It probably comes from that Aulen is thought to have a dualistic idea between good and evil. Yet, for him, redemption is God's own work.45 After all, the devil is not only God's enemy

his dualism is not absolute Dualism.

> God in Christ overcomes the hostile powers which hold man in bondage. At the same time these hostile powers are also the executants of God's will. The patristic theology is dualistic, but it is not an absolute Dualism. The deliverance of man from the power of death and the devil is at the same time his deliverance from God's judgment. God is reconciled by his own act in reconciling the world to

43 Against Heresies. V.16.3 (ANF1)
44 Christus Victor. 58.
45 Christus Victor. 73.
46 Christus Victor. 71.

himself.47

Thus Aulen's theory of redemption reflects very well the characteristics of understood the Fathers' theory. He described redemption as God's own work which "attains His purpose by internal, not by external, means;"48 This points toward the direction of Athanasius about whom we will see below.

2.6 The deification of man

Other than God, who can restore the image and likeness of God in humanity? We have already seen that this was the question asked by Athanasius of Arius. Because Christ is God, he could assume and sanctify humanity.

> ...the Father in making Him man for to be made belongs to man, did not simply make Him man, but has made Him in order to His being Lord of all men, and to His hallowing all through the Anointing. For though the Word existing in the form of God took a servant's form, yet the assumption of the flesh did not make a servant of the Word, who was by nature Lord; but rather, not only was it that emancipation of all humanity which takes place by the Word, but that very Word who was by nature Lord, and was then made man hath by means of a servant's form been made Lord of all and Christ, that is, in order to hallow all by the Spirit.49

The incarnation, for the Fathers, includes sanctification in its scope. In the negative saying, sanctification is the restoration of the damaged image of God, yet positively, it

47 Christus Victor. 75.
48 Christus Victor. 70.
49Against Arians 11.14. (NPNF4)

is the union of God and humanity.50

Athanasius also regards human deification as the centre of salvation and says, "For He was made man that we might be made God"51 Whether we call the work of Christ salvation or redemption, if it includes union with God -deification- its definition cannot be limited to that of dealing with sin. Thus, Torrance52 understands the patristic idea of atonement in terms of the inner ontological relationship between Christ and God and between Christ and mankind. That is to say, union with God in and through Jesus Christ who is of one and the same being with God belongs to the inner heart of the atonement.

The concept of the deification of man may seem overly sensational for the modern mind Yet, if it means an inner ontological relationship, the deification by no means suggests having the same essence of God, but means to participate in the life of God. Basil explained it through the conception of divine energy and says, "It is by His energies that we say we know our God; we do not assert that we can come near to the essence itself, for His energies descend to us, but His essence remains unapproachable."53

30 E.g. Irenaeus, Demonstration of the Apostolic preaching, 6.
51 On the Incarnation of the Word, 54. (NPNF4)
52 The Trinitarian Faith. 159-160
53 Leter234 adAmphilochium.

3 The problem of humanity

3.1 The Methodology of Gregory

Lossky compares the methodology of Gregory and Augustine when they wrestle with the question of humanity and says;

> St. Augustine takes as his starting point the image of God in man, and attempts to work out an idea of God, by trying to discover in Him that which we find in the soul created in His image. The method he employs is one of psychological analogies applied to the knowledge of God, to theology. On the other hand, St Gregory of Nyssa, for instance, starts with what revelation tells us of God in order to discover what it is in man which corresponds to the divine image. This is a theological method applied to the knowledge of man, to anthropology. The first way seeks to know God by starting from man created in His image; the second wishes to define the true nature of man by starting from the idea of God in whose image man has been created.54

Thus, for Gregory, humanity is created in the image of God, so what is in God tells us about humanity before the fall. Also, the problem of humanity should be found in its distance from what is in God. We will follow this methodology of Gregory and argue as to the problem of humanity.

3.2 Image and Likeness

According to the methodology of Gregory, the image of God in man is evaluated in its highest grade. Because God is infinite good, the image in man is nothing less than a

54 The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church. 114-5

partaking in this infinite good. Thus Gregory says in On The Making of Man.

> God is in His own nature all that which our mind can conceive of good; — rather, transcending all good that we can conceive or comprehend. He creates man for no other reason than that He is good; and being such, and having this as His reason for entering upon the creation of our nature, He would not exhibit the power of His goodness in an imperfect form, giving our nature some one of the things at His disposal, and grudging it a share in another: but the perfect form of goodness is here to be seen by His both bringing man into being from nothing, and fully supplying him with all good gifts: but since the list of individual good gilts is a long one, it is out of the question to apprehend it numerically. The language of Scripture therefore expresses it concisely by a comprehensive phrase, in saying that man was made "in the image of God": for this is the same as to say that He made human nature participant in all good; for if the Deity is the fullness of good, and this is His image, then the image finds its resemblance to the Archetype in being filled with all good...Now as the image bears in all points the semblance of the archetypal excellence, if it had not a difference in some respect, being absolutely without divergence it would no longer be a likeness, but will in that case manifestly be absolutely identical with the Prototype. What difference then do we discern between the Divine and that which has been made like to the Divine? We find it in the fact that the former is uncreate, while the latter has its being from creation...55

Gregory has two more points to make on the image of God as a partaking in the infinite God. First, the image of God cannot be restricted to particular characteristics. Man was given all the goodness of God except the distinction between creature and creator. For Origen and Clement the image of God in the human soul was reason. Yet, Gregory insists that not only reason but also all good existed in the man at the time of his creation

55 On The Making pi Man. C6 (NPNF5)

> ac.. .our Maker also, painting the portrait to resemble His own beauty, by the addition of virtues, as it were with colors, shows in us His own sovereignty: and manifold and varied are the tints, so to say, by which His true form is portrayed: ...purity, freedom from passion, blessedness, alienation from all evil, and all those attributes of the like kind which help to form in men the likeness of God: with such hues as these did the Maker of His own image mark our nature.56

Second, humanity at the creation was perfect as we saw above, and the image of God in man was not independent from God but it was made in order that, "...the nature of man...might aim at that which was native to it [God], (The Great Catechism 5.4, 5.6) Therefore Adam was not perfect if he did not aim at God. He should steer his will towards union with God. And actually, until the fall, this had been his joy.

> man by the commission of the Divine blessing had been elevated to a lofty pre-eminence (for he was appointed king over the earth and all things on it; he was beautiful in his form, being created an image of the archetypal beauty; he was without passion in his nature, for he was an imitation of the unimpassioned; he was full of frankness, delighting in a face-to-face manifestation of the personal Deity. ,57

Therefore, the image and likeness, according to Gregory, was not a matter of human qualities or abilities but of union and communion with God. Lossky emphasises the importance of free will for the necessary condition of this union. This free will is not the mere ability to choose. The free will makes it possible that, "...we are free from necessity, and not in bondage to any natural power, but have decision in our own power

56 On The Making of Man. C5 (NPNF5)
57 The Great Catechism C6 (NPNF5)

as we please; for virtue is a voluntary thing, subject to no dominion..." 58 In other words human free will makes union and communion with God possible, because every act of communion becomes true when it is done voluntarily. Thus Gregory thought human free will as the central principle of the image of God.59

> For He who made man for the participation of His own peculiar good, and incorporated in him the instincts for all that was excellent, in order that his desire might be carried forward by a corresponding movement in each case to its like, would never have deprived him of that most excellent and precious of all goods; I mean the gift implied in being his own master, and having a free will. For if necessity in any way was the master of the life of man, the "image" would have been falsified in that particular part, by being estranged owing to this unlikeness to its archetype. How can that nature which is under a yoke and bondage to any kind of necessity be called an image of a Master Being? Was it not, then, most right that that which is in every detail made like the Divine should possess in its nature a self-ruling and independent principle, such as to enable the participation of good to be the reward of its virtue? 60

3.3 Human free will

In chapter one, we saw that Gregory's view that the nature of man inevitably changes is because man is a creature. Adam, however, misused his free will and fell into a movement towards evil. The so-called original sin of Adam is his choice to turn from

58 On The Making of Man. C16 (NPNF5)
59 Meredith (The Cappadocians, 57) thinks Gregory gradually moved to this theory from the idea regarding the image of God as being reason. The former position can be seen in The Great Catechism c5(c.a.385) and On The Making of Man (c4) whose date of writing being unclear and the later is in On The Soul and the Resurrection (380or381.
60 The Great Catechism c5 (NPNF5)

God towards himself. In this sense, free will was the cause of the fall.61 62 The result of the fall was, first of all, the infection and damage of the free will. Gregory says that

"...mixing up badness in man's will...has produced a kind of extinguishment and dullness in the blessing.. ."64 Yet, the free will was not totally deprived.

Also in The Great Catechism 30, Gregory answered the question which asks for the reason why some are saved while others are not. It is not because God lacks the power or will. It is because, "He Who holds the sovereignty of the universe, out of the excess of this regard for man, permitted something to be under our own control, of which each of us alone is master. Now this is the will, a thing that cannot be enslaved, and of self-determining power, since it is seated in the liberty of thought and mind."

Thus it is the free will that is both the cause65 and result of the free will. Gregory said in

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61 In some sense, we can say that God restricted his own omnipotence. This is because when God gave man freedom, even for God, man's rebellion was a mere possibility.
62 If man is the image of God, the cause of the evil should be neither God nor man. Here Gregory insisted the double fall theory which says that there were heavenly fell before human fell. (On The Making of Man cl6.) Yet this theory has no other function in his system and is a rather isolated one.
63 Christ seems not to assume the damage of the will although he assumed rest of all human nature. Gregory says in his On perfection (NPNF5), "When Christ united man to himself by the power of his divinity, he assumed part of our common nature not subject to nature's passions which excite us to sin (for it says "He committed no sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth")..." This is because Christ maintained perfect relationship with the Father.
64 The Great Catechism c6 (NPNF5)
65 Gregory knew the importance of the free will when man accepts Christ. Yet, the discussion as to whether Gregory gave priority to human achievement over God's grace is inadequate because it reads the later Pelagian controversy into the fourth century. For Gregory, the image of God given to the first man was the

his verses on baptism, "And yet human nature does not of itself admit of any change in baptism; neither the reason, nor the understanding, nor the scientific faculty, nor any other peculiar characteristic of man is a subject for change..." what changes in us is that "...we become "clean" in our wills..."66 This was the substance of conversion for Gregory. He encourages those who are able to choose freely, and said "If, then, you have received God, if you have become a child of God, make manifest in your disposition the God that is in you, manifest in yourself Him that begot you "(The Great Catechism 40)67 It is the restored free will that unites the Christian's life to Christ. Also the same restored free will becomes the key to sanctification, as Gregory said, he "thoroughly cleansed himself from all the stains arising from evil."68

Thus, in Gregory's system the free will was of the highest importance, beginning with its central role in the image of God, all the way through the cause and result of the fall, and until conversion and sanctification 69

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gift of God who is gracious unlimitedly. What he could say on the free will that centred in the image was that free will couldn't be totally damaged unless we attribute the origin of evil to God. Further more, if God is not guilty for the destruction of unbelieved, It should be free will that determines human destiny.

66 The Great Catechism 40 (NPNF5)

67 Gregory says in the same intention, "But as to the blessing which springs from these two things[faith and water], oh! how great and how wonderful it is, that it should imply relationship with Deity itself!" (The Great Catechism c36 (NPNF5))

68 The Great Catechism 36 (NPNF5)

69 The origin of evil, also, is the free will because evil remains a mere possibility if it is not realised by the free will. The Life of Moses reads, "...nothing evil can come into existence apart from our free choice" (II .88) Here the apparent minor role that Satan plays. It is human free will that can create evil. This has some agreement with Augustine although the two systems of Gregory and Augustine do not appear to be cautiously related.

3.4 The fall and original sin

As Gregory of Nazianzus said, "For that which He [Christ] has not assumed He has not healed; but that which is united to His Godhead is also saved." (Letter 101) This was the truth that was repeatedly insisted upon by the Fathers and we also start from it when we think about the problem of humanity. Salvation, as we saw above, is the healing of humanity through Christ's obedient life and death beginning with the incarnation. Therefore, it is the Fathers' presupposition that Christ assumed entirely the same humanity as ours through out his whole life.

Apollinaris asked how Christ can be true human while committing no sin, and tried to answer by denying the humanity of Christ. However, Gregory did not compromise the true humanity and sinlessness of Christ through his distinction between sinful and fallen humanity. J. H. Srawley the outline of Gregory's answer to Apollinaris70, while he thought the answer is only indirect. Our humanity is sinful. Christ dealt with this sinful humanity. Thus Gregory said, "that He united with Himself the sinful soul of man".71 Consequently, Christ's humanity became the "fallen humanity" as he writes "In His

70 Srawley, J. H. "St. Gregory of Nyssa on the Sinlessness of Christ" JTS 7(1906),434-441. Also, "Cappadocian Theology/' Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics. Edinburgh: T and T Clark., 1910. Vol. HI. 212-217.
71 Against Apollinaris. C23.

great long-suffering He endured not to repel from communion with Himself our nature fallen though it was as the result of sin, but to receive it to Himself again."72

Yet, for Gregory, Christ's humanity was not sinful. He could say, "For though He took our filth upon Himself, yet He is not Himself defiled by the pollution; but in His own self He purifies the filth".73 In this purifying action, the important is the role of the Holy Spirit. Srawley's summary on chapter 54 of Against Apollinaris is accurate which says, "This purification was effected at the very moment of the conception of the Virgin. The Divine nature was present in both the body and the soul of Christ from the every first, and rendered each of them sinless."74 Gregory said. Thus Gregory said that Christ assumed the fallen but not sinful humanity. This distinction is important. Gregory is even more clear on this distinction when he wrote, "Christ shared our human feelings and weakness, but did not share our tendency to sin or disease of will."75

Later, Augustine thought that the original sin is inherited like a disease . Yet, we should not read this idea into Gregory. Gregory knew the sinful humanity of man. But he did not speculate the origin of it. Every man commits sin. Christ, though his

12Against Apollinaris. C26
73Against Apollinaris. C23

74 ≪ Cappadocian Theology." 215.

75 Contra Eunomius. 6.

76 In Augustinian system the Holy Spirit does not play much role. It is because Augustine did not distinguish sinful and fallen humanity.

humanity is perfect, did not commit sin. It is only because of Christ's deity. If we develop the idea of Gregory according to the line of his thought, the origin of sinful humanity will be very opposite of Augustine. The sinless perfect humanity of Christ suggests the heart of the problem is the lack of the union with God.

For the Fathers, original sin means, a "...decision of free will which separated man from God"[77] resulting in the deviation of the free will from God to whom it should aim towards the creature.[78] It ends up with final separation from God, namely death. The human problem is the fact that we are far away from God and cannot escape our situation by ourselves. Of course, every man sins. Yet the Fathers think it happens not because there is a bent towards sin but because there is an absence of a healthy free will, means that the relationship with God is damaged.

77 The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church. 130.
78 This is the reason why death, pain and aging happen as results of Adam's sin.

4 The doctrine of holiness in Gregory of Nyssa

4.1 Life of Moses and Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles

Life of Moses was written for a young man (1.2) who asks furnishing with some counsel concerning the perfect life (τέλειος βίος)(I.2). For Gregory, to live the perfect life is to go the way (δρόμος) of virtue (άρετη). (1.1) άρετη is the word usually translated virtue; yet it has a nuance wider than the merely ethical. Indeed as Gregory says, "Certainly whoever pursues true virtue participates in nothing other than God, because he is himself absolute virtue." (1.7), the way of virtue is the way to God who is the source of virtue.

Although Life of Moses has recently been popular for its spiritual teaching, we must remember the danger of separating it from the Trinitarian theology of Gregory who is often rather inadequately called an ascetic mystic. It is true that Life contains very practical advice for the spiritual life. At the same time, however, it has a firm base on the Greek Fathers' theology which was succeeded and brought to its peak by Gregory.

Jean Danielou79 thinks that Gregory, following Origen80, described the three stages of the spiritual life. These are (1) the manifestation of God as light in the burning bush (epiphaneia) (2) Moses' climbing into the cloud; the direct perception of hidden matters (katanoésis)(3) Moses' intrusion into the darkness; the recognition of God as darkness (thognósia). Although Daniélou admits that one stage is not strictly exclusive of another, they are basically pursued in order from one to the next. explains these three; (l)the purification of the soul from foreign elements and by the restoration of the image of God;(2)the experience(3) mystical experience that the soul finds itself as it were elevated above all created things and at the same time lost in an infinite darkness

Where in it loses its contact with things. Yet the actual passages from which Daniélou draws these steps is not in Life of Moses itself but Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles, whose contents concern the encounter of the soul with her long sought for Christ. Therefore, it does not seem to me legitimate to draw these steps from Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles. Also, even in Life of Moses, the intrusion into the darkness is not the end of the story. Consequent to the intrusion, Moses was shown "the tabernacle not made with hands"(II. 167) which is ""Christ"(IL174). Therefore, it is far from Gregory's intention to single out the burning bush, the cloud of Sinai and the

79
From Glory to Glory. 23flf
80 Commentary on the Sons: of Songs, Introduction. (Hellenic College Press Version)

darkness from other parts of the life of Moses. Above all, according to Daniélou the static perfection of mystic union with God is possible; yet this pushes back Gregory's concept of dynamic perfection to Platonism - a philosophy he left behind. Thus Daniélou's evaluation does not do justice to Gregory's innovation too small.

On the other hand, Mar Gregorios' understanding is more faithful to Gregory's intention.

> How exactly does this participation take place? Gregory is very traditional in his answer-by Repentance, by Baptism, and by the Life of arete. Let us make clear that this is his basic structure of soteriology-not a so-called, 'mystical experience' as some authors who have written on Gregory seem to leave the impression. What is called the 'mystical vision of God' is only an aspect of the turning towards God in repentance, being co-crucified and co-resurrected with Christ, being united with Christ through Baptism. Chrisrnation and the Eucharist, and the life of aretē e lived out in history.81

When we read Life of Moses; let us follow Mar Gregorios and be cautious not to discover a gap which does not in reality exist, between the soteriology in The Great Catechism and other theological works and spiritual works such as Life of Moses and Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles.

4.2 The starting point of Sanctification

The Fathers started from the recognition that holiness exists only in God, and therefore

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[81] Cosmic Man —The Divine Presence. - NY: Paragon House., 1988,198.

there is no other way for humanity to participate in the holiness of God than the initiative of God.[82] Who is this God who took the initiative in sanctifying humanity? He is God who is transcendent and created all from nothing by his own free will. Yet he is at the same time God who did not leave humanity in our plight and for our restoration came into us by the Incarnation, the Son. Furthermore He is the Spirit who makes it possible for us to participate in this salvation in Christ. Thus it is not accidental that the establishment of the doctrine of the Trinity corresponded with the beginning of the doctrine of holiness. Also, as the staring point of the doctrine of holiness is Christ, our sanctification begins when we participate in Christ. It begins when we meet the Incarnated God who is Christ. For Gregory, The burning bush is this first revelation of God. The light Moses saw in the burning bush was the God who took the 'body' of the burning bush. So, Gregory says;

> It is upon us who continue in this quiet and peaceful course of life that the truth will shine, illuminating the eyes of our soul with its own rays. This truth, which was then manifested by the ineffable and mysterious illumination which came to Moses, is God.(H 19.)

> And if the flame by which the soul of the prophet was illuminated was kindled from a thorny bush, even this fact will not be useless for our inquiry. For if truth is God and truth is light -the Gospel testifies by these sublime and divine names to the God who made himself visible to us in the flesh- such guidance of virtue leads us to know that light which has reached down even to human nature. Lest one think that the radiance did not come from a material substance, this light did not shine from some luminary among the stars but came from an earthly bush and

82 "Re-Minting Christian Holiness Part 20: Holiness in the Early Church Fathers." 21

surpassed the heavenly luminaries in brilliance. (11.20.)

The reason why God decided upon and acted in becoming a man who is creature was to rest orate our fallen humanity in the humanity of Christ. Gregory clearly understood this as well as the preceded Fathers.83 Gregory, similarly to Irenaeus, says that the purpose of the Incarnation is that of liberation from death and sin.

> These seem to me to signify in a figure the mystery of the Lord's incarnation, a manifestation of deity to men which effects the death of the tyrant and sets free those under his power.(n.27)

Gregory thinks that humans are in a "prison of death, which is without an egress"(ZZ?e Great Catechism. 3$) Christ liberates us from death to life. He releases us from the way of living to live like dead and eventually destroys oneself and others by one's self-centredness.

Yet the concept of the liberation is much better expressed through the metaphor of medical healing rather than that of the military destruction by power. Gregory explains the Incarnation by using the image of a miraculous healing hand and says;

83 The "hook" theory in The Great Catechism that says that the devil was destroyed when he swallowed the hook that was the divinity of Christ, is notorious. Yet this was written in the middle of chapters 22 to 26, which is an insertion for the purpose of demonstrating God's legitimacy. And, even in this part, The traditional theory of salvation appears as in c25 (NPNF5) which says, "...at that other time He was transfused throughout our nature, in order that our nature might by this transfusion of the Divine become itself divine, rescued as it was from death, and put beyond the reach of the caprice of the antagonist Thus Gregory's chief idea of redemption and atonement was the same as fathers' traditional one.

> When he was manifested to us from the bosom of the Father, he was changed to be like us. After he wiped away our infirmities, he again returned to his own bosom the hand which had been among us and had received our complexion. (The Father is the bosom of the right hand.) What is impassible by nature did not change into what is passible, but what is mutable and subject to passions was transformed into impassibility through its participation in the immutable. (1130.)

In this part, it is said of Christ that "he was changed to be like us," namely he assumed our humanity by the Incarnation. Our humanity was assumed by him who is described as Moses' "hand which had been among us and had received our complexion." He assumed it for it's healing. After the healing, "our infirmities" no longer exists and the new humanity is born in Christ. Here The Son of Man who must be lifted up as the bronze snake in the wilderness is understood similarly.(H.31) The Snake was our sinful humanity which was assumed and healed by Christ. Gregory thought that by the words "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us..." in 2 Cor. 5:21 Paul means Christ's assuming of sinful humanity. For Gregory, sin is the same as that which it came from, namely sinful humanity, and he saw no difficulty in identifying call the cause of sin as sin also.

> The teaching is clear. For if the father of sin is called a serpent by Holy Scripture and what is born of the serpent is certainly a serpent, it follows that sin is synonymous with the one who begot it. But the apostolic word testifies that the Lord on was made into sin for our sake by being invested with our sinful nature. (11.32.)

> This figure therefore is rightly applied to the Lord. For if sin is a serpent and the Lord became sin, the logical conclusion should be evident to all: By becoming sin he became also a serpent, which is nothing other than sin. For our sake he became a serpent that he might devour and consume the Egyptian serpents produced by the sorcerers. (H.33.)

Here we should not confuse the two serpents before Moses and the bronze snake about which we argued before. Yet, if we concentrate on that, then in both cases Gregory thought of the snake as being sinful humanity. Moses' snake, which is Christ who assumed sinful humanity, swallowed and healed the Egyptian snake which is sinful humanity.

The other expression of the restoration of fallen humanity by the Incarnation is the first and second stone tables of the Ten Commandments. The first tables were, "unbroken and immortal" (11.215) human nature in which we can see that "...the intention of the Law lay in our nature in turning us away from evil and in honouring the divine." (11.215) Yet, that humanity was damaged "when the sound of sin struck our ears... "(11.216), that is the temptation of the serpent in Gen. 3:4. Only God can recreate it; and this was achieved by the Incarnation.

> When the sound of sin struck our ears, that sound which the first book of Scripture calls the "voice of the serpent," but the history concerning the tables calls the "voice of drunken singing," the tables fell to the earth and were broken. But again the true Lawgiver, of whom Moses was a type, cut the tables of human nature for himself from our earth. It was not marriage which produced for him his "God-receiving" flesh, but he became the stonecutter of

> his own flesh, which was carved by the divine finger, for the Holy Spirit came upon the virgin and the power of the Most High overshadowed her. When this took place, our nature regained its unbroken character, becoming immortal through the letters written by his finger... (11.216.)

However, the most theological expression of the Incarnation can be seen in The Great

> .. .For since the method of our salvation was made effectual not so much by His precepts in the way of teaching as by the deeds of Him Who has realized an actual fellowship with man, and has effected life as a living feet, so that by means of the flesh which He has assumed, and at the same time deified, everything kindred and related may be saved along with it.. ,84

Here "flesh" means the whole of our humanity. And the purpose of the Incarnation was "...to call us back from death to life." (The Great Catechism c32) This calling back to life should be related to not only a part of our humanity but, "...there was needed lifting up from death for the whole of our nature... " (c32) Christ in his Incarnation dealt with all the scope of human experience . .such as birth, rearing, growing up, and advancing even to the taste of death,..." and "He accomplished all the results before mentioned, freeing both man from evil..." (c26)

4.3 The mechanism of the sanctification

How does our participation in the restored humanity in Christ begin? How does it proceed? This is a question concerning the way of sanctification, namely the restoration of the image of God. Balas thinks that the participation in the perfection of God is the central theme of Gregory, and explains the relationship between

the communion of God's attributes and partaking of God.

84 The Great Catechism C35 (NPNF5)

> The very aim or consummation of virtuous life is said to consist in the≪ participation of God≫, ...Thus, since we are called Christians by partaking of Christ, our perfection has to consist in the communion of His attributes, and since, according to Gregory, the name ≪ Christ≫ signifies the Divinity of our Lord, ≪ Christianism ≫itself can be defined as the ≪ imitation of the Divine Nature ≫." ... The categories of participation are applied by Gregory to every virtue he is treating of. In his first work, De virginitate, Gregory explains that virginity - which in his interpretation means rather incorruption in a spiritual sense - is primarily a perfection of God, and thus the participants of it will be in a certain sense ≪ divinised≫. Also the other virtues, e. g. purity, * incorruption, justice, wisdom, are found primarily and essentially in God, or rather He is all these virtues. We possess them only by participation, and by partaking of them we possess somehow God (or Christ) Himself in us."85

Balás' analysis seems to me accurate in the light of Gregory's own writings. Balás thinks that Gregory's understanding of sanctification begins with union with Christ by "being imparted from the Member to the whole by virtue of the continuity and oneness of the nature."(*The Great Catechism*. c32)86 And "Christ possesses one pure nature which is the same for anyone who participates in it.(On perfection.) On this theme Gregory writes much in the second and third homilies of Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles. Yet, seeing the image of God within us is not to know the nature of God, who cannot be known by the creation except through his own revelation.

> ...for the good transcending the human mind cannot be accurately presented...The revelation presented here says that the divine nature transcends every conception which tries to grasp it

85 MET0T2IA 0EQT153-4
86 In the background to these thoughts, there is an idea of consubstantiality of humanity between Christ's and ours. Although it is not before Chalcedon in 451 that a clear proclamation of the "όμοούσιος" was made, it was anticipated by the Cappadocians.

> Our understanding of the divine nature resembles what we seek. It does not show its form which no one has seen or can see, but through a mirror and a riddle [1 Cor 13.12] it provides a reflection of the thing sought, that is, a reflection present in the soul by a certain likeness. (The third homily 82) 87

If this is the case, how can we know the nature of God? Gregory's answer is truly striking. He says that we know God through his image which has been restored within ourselves. Of course, the degree of the recovery is particular to each person; so a person knows God according to the degree of the recovered image of God within himself As if he himself is a mirror of God, he sees God through himself

> ...such a person would not have it in his nature to look steadily upon the Word of God as upon the sun; rather he sees it within himself as in a mirror. For the rays of that true, divine virtue shine forth in a pure life by the out-flow of detachment (*apatheia)* and make the invisible visible to us and the inaccessible comprehensible by depicting the sun in the mirror of our souls. (The third homily 84)

Therefore knowing God is never mere intellectual work. Only through the imitating of Christ, that is participation in the sanctified humanity of Christ, can he know God as much as his participation. The latter part of the third homily clarifies this.

> How happy is that orchard whose fruit resembles the bridegroom's beauty! For he is the true light, true life, and true righteousness, and all the rest, as Wisdom says [Prov. 1.3]. When a person becomes these qualities by good works, he looks into the cluster of his own conscience and sees the bridegroom there.. .(The third homily 87)

87 Commentary on the Song of Songs. Brookline, Mass: Hellenic College Press., 1987

We may feel hesitant to say that we see the image of God within us. Is it not too arrogant and too great an evaluation of human beings? Yet, human is precious because he is made in the image of God and he is to be restored to that image. The glory is always attributed to God. Thus Gregory praises God in the second

> ...realize how much more than the rest of creation you are honored by the Creator. He did not make the heavens in his image, nor the moon, sun, the stars' beauty, nor anything else you see in creation. You alone are made in the likeness of that nature which surpasses all understanding, the image of incorruptible beauty, the impression of true divinity, receptacle of blessed life, seal of true light You will become what he is by looking at him. By imitating him who shines within you [2 Cor 4.6], his gleam is reflected by your purity.
> Nothing in creation can compare to your greatness. All of heaven is contained in the grasp of God's hand, and the earth and sea fit in the palm of his hand. Although he holds all creation in his palm, you can wholly contain him. God dwells in you, penetrates you, and is not confined in von (70)

Thus humanity is moved from death to partaking in the life of God. Gregory thought the purpose of Baptism88 is "...arriving at life..."(72ie Great Catechism c35) Yet, until the death of our flesh, not all human problems will be resolved. For Gregory, what happens in Baptism is "...a kind of break in the continuity of the evil..." (c35) and it means "...the man is in a measure freed from his congenital tendency to evil..."(c35)

We must await resurrection to be completely separated from all evil in both our soul and

8 Gregory thought that the baptismal liturgy itself imparts the life of God. On the other hand, he wrote in The Life of Moses and said, "...all the other things which are performed by evil are so many tyrants and masters. If someone should still serve them, even if he should happen to have passed through the water, according to my thinking he has not at all touched the mystical water whose function is to destroy evil tyrants."(II129) Here he thinks that without substance baptism has no significance.

body.

The degree of sanctification is determined by the degree of our union with Christ. The stronger we are connected with Christ, the more likeness we know to the image of God in Christ's humanity, and the restoration of our humanity becomes more thorough. Thus Gregory could say, "If, then, one should withdraw from those who seduce him to evil and by the use of his reason turn to the better, putting evil behind him.. .the images and impressions of virtue, as it is shown to him by God, are imprinted on the purity of his soul." (Life of Moses II47) The process of the restoration of God's image is infinite, because the humanity which was made in the image of the infinite God is also infinite. This theme is developed in the fifteenth homily and is worth lengthy quotation.

> We say that the bride's praises are lessons which teach about more refined matters. Such a teaching is as follows: beings are created and renewed not in accord with the same order and system. Because creation exists from its very beginning by the divine power, the end of each created being is linked with its beginning: everything created from nothing comes into existence with its beginning. Human nature is also created but does not, like other created beings, advance towards its perfection, but right from the beginning it is created perfect: "Let us make man according to the image and likeness of God" [Gen I .26]. Here is the veiy summit and perfection of goodness. What can be more exalted than similarity to God? Thus the end of the first creation is simultaneous with its beginning, for human nature originated in perfection. Since this human nature became subject to death because of its disposition to evil, perseverance in the good was destroyed. Human nature takes up its perfection not at once, as in the beginning, but progresses towards the good by an order which gradually gets rid of our inclination towards evil. In the first creation there was no impediment present with the birth of our human nature, for it was perfect and lacked evil. But in the second restoration, an interval

> of time necessarily accompanies those pursuing the first good. Because our minds incline towards evil, our association with evil is removed like bark which is gradually scraped off by a more becoming life. (271-2)

Earlier we noted that sanctification begins when we meet Christ. Also, growth in sanctification depends upon union with Christ and needs no other mechanism. Gregory writes on the beginning of sanctification and says, "...the soul being fused into Him through faith derives from that the means and occasion of salvation;..." {The Great Catechism c37) For him, the growth of sanctification finds its progressive power in personal communion with God in Christ. Here lies the necessity of the free will. It is because "We are in some manner our own parents, giving birth to ourselves by our own free choice in accordance with whatever we wish to be..(Life of Moses II3) When a human by his free will asks for communion with God in Christ, God responds. This is because the recovering image of God itself contains the potential of communion. Indeed, the purpose of the gift of the image is this very communion with God. Ex 20:11 is the primary motif of communion with God for Gregory.

> What dies it mean that Moses entered the darkness and then saw God in it?...But as the mind progresses and, through an ever greater and more nearly to contemplation, it sees more clearly what of the divine nature is uncompleted. (II. 162)

> For leaving behind everything that is observed, not only what sense comprehends but also what the intelligence thinks it sees, it keeps on penetrating deeper until by the intelligence's yearning for understanding it gains access to the invisible and the incomprehensible, and there

> it sees God. This is the true knowledge of what is sought; this is the seeing that consists in not seeing, because that which is sought transcends all knowledge, being separated on all sides by incomprehensibility as by a kind of darkness. Wherefore John the sublime, who penetrated into the luminous darkness, says, No one has ever seen God, thus asserting that knowledge of the divine essence is unattainable not only by men but also by every intelligent creature/ n.163.)

> When, therefore, Moses grew in knowledge, he declared that he had seen God in the darkness, that is, that he had then come to know that what is divine is beyond all knowledge and comprehension, for the text says, Moses approached the dark cloud where God was. What God? He who made darkness his hiding place, as David says, who also was initiated into the mysteries in the same inner sanctuary. (H164.)

Thus, on the one hand repeatedly God's infiniteness is emphasised while on the other communion with God is continuously encouraged. How is it possible? In the sixth homily where the bride finds and catches the beloved, Gregory says that the communion becomes possible through faith.

> After the bride passed throughout that transcendent city and did not perceive her love among immaterial and spiritual beings, she forsakes everything she has found. She realizes that her sought-after love is known only in her impossibility to comprehend his essence, and that every sign becomes a hindrance to those who seek him. Therefore, the bride says," 'When I passed them by a little,' I left every creature and passed by every intelligible being in creation; having forsaken every manner of comprehension. I found my beloved by faith. No longer will I let him go once found by faith until he comes within my chamber." The "chamber" is indeed the heart which becomes an acceptable dwelling of God when it returns to that state which it had in the beginning made by "her who conceived me." (131)

Because Gregory is usually thought of as a mystic, union with God by faith may sound rather commonplace. Yet, if union with God who is beyond our ability to grasp is

possible, it can be expressed only as union by faith. We know union neither by sense nor by mind: It merely exists apart from our use of these faculties. We do not know why we are able to know the existence of union, and it is wholly worthy of being called a mystery.

4.4 Christian perfection

Yet our restoration in the image of God is by no means perfect . This is because perfection exists only in God and perfect humanity can be found only in Christ. The infinite distance between God and creature does not allow us to have perfect communion with God, in other words, perfect divinity. It is, as we saw in chapter 3, not because of our original sin but because of God's infinity. Here lies the reason why Gregory records the climbing of Mt. Sinai after the burning bush. Going into darkness signifies the impossibility of gaining perfection, which is possessed only by God. What is, then, the perfection attainable to man? Gregory answered this by saying:

> We should show great diligence not to fell away from the perfection which is attainable but to

89 There are two kinds of usage on the image of God within Gregory's writings. On the one hand, as in chapter 5 of *The Great Catechis*, the human movement toward God thorough free will is thought as the image of God. In this case the primitive image itself is regarded as the dynamic movement toward God. On the other hand, the primitive situation of human is also called as the image of God, as in the 15 th homily of Commentary on the Canticle of Canticle. However these two views do not contradict each other. It is because that the second usage, the primitive situation also pointed toward God. The situation was not standing alone without God. Rather, human desires God in that situation. In this sense, the image as the movement consists main strand for Gregory.

> acquire as much as is possible: To that extent let us make progress within the realm of what we seek. For the perfection of human nature consists perhaps in its very growth in goodness. (II-10.)

Gregory called this attitude to grow towards God *epectasis* which was derived from "ἐπεκτείνομαι" (to stretch forward) in Phil. 3:13. He explains it in the eighth homily.

> Al though the stage attained is indeed greater than what a person had earlier, this stage does not limit his good; rather, the limit of his achievement becomes a beginning for the discovery of higher blessings. The person rising never stands still. He moves from one beginning to another, for the beginning of even greater blessings is never limited The desire of a soul thus rising never remains in its knowledge, but by an an ever greater desire, it moves onwards. The soul thus progresses through higher realms towards the unbounded. (162)

This ever-proceeding *epectasis* arises because of God's infiniteness90 and man's continual movement. Gregory calls God "absolute virtue" (1.7) and says, "The one limit of virtue is the absence of a limit" (1.5,8) The race of virtue should not be regarded as mere moral progress. Because absolute virtue is God, perfection is to "...consider becoming God's friend the only thing worthy of honor and desire" (II320) and it is ever-increasing personal union with God.91

Thus, now we follow the double infinite ways of *epectasis*. On the one hand, we partake in the sanctified humanity in Christ. Negatively, it is the purification of life; and

90 It is said that God is "unattainable." (1.47)
91 Lossky says, "This awareness of the incomprehensibility of the divine nature thus corresponds to an experience; to a meeting with the personal God of revelation " (The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church. 34). If we know the inaccessible God, there is no other way than personal union.

positively it is the restoration of the image of God. On the other hand, we are continuously being invited into deeper communion with God. Even the image of God in the man at the time of creation is thought to be not an outward stamp that can be sustained independently of God; but to be a partaking in God. The pre-fallen human who had the perfect image sought ever-deeper communion with God. We were such a creation. To call on the name of God is our reason for existence, our essence and the image of God. The bride who is looking for her lover in the Song of Songs (5:6) is the motif of the epectasis of the soul toward God,

> The soul which looks to God and conceives that desire for incorruptible beauty always has a new desire for the transcendent, and it is never dulled by satiety. Such a soul never ceases to stretch forth to what lies before, going out from her present stage to what lies ahead. Anything great and marvelous always seems inferior in comparison to what succeeds it, since what the bride has found seems more beautiful than her earlier discoveries. Thus Paul died each day [1 Cor 15.13], because at all times he partook of a new life, being dead to the past and forgetful of previous things. (The twelfth homily 223-4)

Conclusion : The definition of sanctification in Gregory

Gregory started his doctrine of holiness from the Triune God and, therefore, his definition of sanctification is unique in its depth and width. According to Gregory;

> (1) Sanctification is the restoration of the image of God. It is to make our own the assumed and restored fallen humanity in Christ. Therefore, it is the reality which takes place on our side, by the redemption and atonement which is God's work. It begins at encounter with Christ and so it cannot be called the second stage of the Christian life subsequent to justification. Rather, it is one aspect of salvation. And a major one.92
> (2) Sanctification is, at the same time, restoration of communion with God. It begins at our union with God in Christ, and the depth of the union determines the depth of communion.
> (3) Sanctification is never brought to perfection in its partaking in God, yet human beings can reach the perfection of will which continues to will ever deepening communion with God. Thus there is a distinction between the perfection of God and man.

The depth and width in the doctrine of holiness in Gregory is, at the same time, the depth and width of his doctrine of sin. For Gregory, sin is exactly the opposite concept to perfection, because to stop at the way of sanctification immediately means the beginning of the alienation from God.93

92 Justification is another aspect of salvation. Justification and sanctification deal with other aspects of the relationship between God and man.
93 Torrance (The Trinitarian Faith, 178) thinks that in Gregory's system "insufficient attention was given to the gravity of guilt" and he had a deficient sense of the moral requirements of God's nature. Gregory's definition of sin, "alienation from God" is, similarly, not seen as adequate by Torrance. Gregory's definition, however, included the violence of the God's moral requirement and goes beyond this. It seems to me that Gregory is by no means inferior to Athanasius in his recognition of the seriousness of sin. Torrance, furthermore, relates Gregory's "hook" theory to this defect, yet the "hook" theory cannot be thought as a main strand of Gregory's system as we saw above.

> Just as the end of life is the beginning of death, so also stopping in the race of virtue marks the beginning of the race of evil. (1.6)

This point influences Christian life immensely. The existential view of sin, namely violence to the known law, is too narrow for Gregory. Not to try to exclude all obstacles between God and man is, in his definition, sin. Christ had already dealt with every problem in the way of union and communion with God, therefore there is no excuse for us not to partake.

This implies a hard lesson, particularly for undisciplined modern man. Gregory regarded "evil habits" (11.208) as sin because it also is one of the obstacles. The desire which awakes our habits does not cease all the way through our life. We need to deal

> Man, then, is freed from sin through him who assumed the form of sin and became like us who had turned into the form of the serpent. He keeps the bites from causing death, but the beasts themselves are not destroyed. By beasts I mean desires. For although the evil of death which follows sins does not prevail against those who look to the cross, the lust of flesh against spirit has not completely ceased to exist. (11.276)

The evil habits that respond to desire cannot be resolved without being replaced by holy habits. Here is the necessity of the discipline which is to "...regard falling from God's friendship as the only thing dreadful..."(IL320) and to know that "...it is

necessary to destroy utterly the first birth of evil..."(11.90, 92,95,107,125), namely to

"...conduct our lives as far from it [the disease of pleasure] as possible (n.303) and

"...to abolish lust and anger..." (11.93) Thus we need "...the self-controlled and austere

life..." for the purpose of preventing "... sin from slipping inside unnoticed."(n. 107)

"From glory to glory"(2Cor.3: 18) is the most famous scriptural verse among Gregory's quotations (e.g. On Perfection) Every Christian is continuously invited to ever-deepening communion with God, to an ever-restoring of the image of God within oneself and to ever-increasing glory.

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